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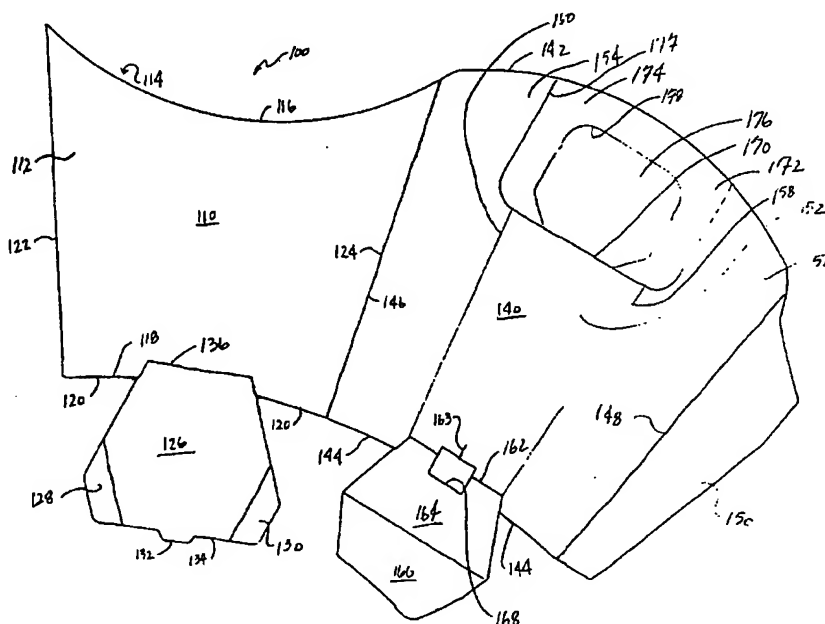
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **ROCK-TENN COMPANY [US/US]**; 504 Thrasher Street, Norcross, GA 30071 (US).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **ROCCAFORTE, Harry, I. [US/US]**; Apartment 1701, 2800 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60657 (US). **RAJTER, Robert, G., Jr. [US/US]**; 1800 Chattahoochee Run Drive, Suwanee, GA 30024-8367 (US).
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(54) Title: **FOOD CONTAINER FOR USE WITH CUP HOLDER AND A BLANK THEREFOR**



(57) Abstract: A food container has a substantially circular base which is insertable into a cup holder. The food container is optionally formed of a plurality of paperboard panels, and optionally comprises a scoop. The food container optionally includes a fold-down structure for supporting a condiment container therein, where a user has simultaneous access to contents of the food container and the condiment container. A blank for forming a circular base includes a plurality of side panels coupled with a bottom panel.

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**FOOD CONTAINER FOR USE WITH CUP HOLDER
AND A BLANK THEREFOR**

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Cross Reference To Related Applications

This application is related to the following co-pending, commonly
10 assigned U.S. patent applications: Application Number 09/528,943 entitled
“FOOD CONTAINER FOR USE WITH CUP HOLDER AND A BLANK
THEREFOR,” filed on 3/21/2000, which is assigned to the assignee of the
present invention, and the disclosure being herein incorporated by reference.

Field of the Invention

15 The present invention relates generally to containers for holding food
therein. More particularly, it pertains to a food container for use with a cup
holder.

Background of the Invention

The fast food industry has developed the practice of merchandising
20 foods, such as french fries, in disposable containers having a semi-rigid
structure, formable in economic fashion from sheet materials. The containers for
serving french fries are generally box-shaped with an open top, such that the
consumer has access to the fries without having to flip open a lid, for instance,
the food container shown in U.S. Patent No. 5,720,429 issued February 24, 1998
25 to Cordle. It is desirable to provide a condiment or sauce with the principal food
product carried by the container. For example, containers of ketchup are
frequently used with french fries. Often the condiments are provided in
separately packaged materials.

People often consume fast food such as french fries in their car, for
30 instance, on long trips or while running errands or driving around town. To
consume the food items the consumer must either hold the container, or can opt
to set the container down. When driving in a car, the available options on to
which to set the container are limited. For instance, the consumer may place the

container on the passenger seat. However, this is undesirable if a passenger is seated in the passenger seat. Further, since the food contained in an unstable open container, the container falls on its side and spills the contents of the container on, for example, the seat on which the container is placed.

- 5 Alternatively, if the consumer attempts to place the food container in a cup-holder, the rectangular base of the food container forces the consumer to place the container in the cup-holder at an acute angle, also resulting the food being spilled.

Accordingly, what is needed is a food container which allows for a
10 consumer to place the food container down without spilling the contents of the food container.

What is further needed is a food container which can be used with conventional forms of condiments. What is also needed is a food container which can be used with a cup holder.

15 **Summary of the Invention**

A food container is provided which includes a generally cylindrical structure extending from a top end to a bottom end. The cylindrical structure is defined in part an outer side surface. The bottom end of the cylindrical structure has a substantially circular base for use with a cup holder. A condiment holder is
20 disposed on the outer side surface of the generally cylindrical structure, such that a user has simultaneous access to contents disposed within the cylindrical structure and condiments disposed in the condiment holder.

The condiment holder optionally includes a condiment panel with a cutout. The condiment panel is partially surrounded by perforated edges. In one
25 embodiment, the condiment holder is foldably coupled with the cylindrical structure, optionally, at a fold line which is offset from the top end of the cylindrical structure.

A food container is provided which includes a generally cylindrical structure extending from a top end to a bottom end. The cylindrical structure is
30 defined in part an outer side surface. The bottom end of the cylindrical structure has a substantially circular base for use with a cup holder. A condiment holder is

foldably coupled with the outer side surface of the generally cylindrical structure, such that a user has simultaneous access to contents disposed within the cylindrical structure and condiments disposed in the condiment holder.

The condiment holder optionally includes a condiment panel with a cut
5 out. The condiment panel is partially surrounded by perforated edges. In one embodiment, the condiment holder is foldably coupled with the cylindrical structure such that the fold line is offset from the top end of the cylindrical structure.

A food container is provided which includes a generally cylindrical
10 structure extending from a top end to a bottom end. The cylindrical structure is defined in part an outer side surface. The cylindrical structure is formed of a plurality of paperboard panels which comprise the outer side surface and the bottom end. The bottom end of the cylindrical structure has a substantially circular base for use with a cup holder.

15 Optionally, the food container including paperboard panels further includes a condiment holder disposed on the outer side surface of the generally cylindrical structure. During use, a user has simultaneous access to contents disposed within the cylindrical structure and condiments disposed in the condiment holder. The condiment panel is optionally foldably coupled with the
20 cylindrical structure. Further, the bottom end of the food container includes two overlapping bottom panels, where at least one of the bottom panels includes a tab which engages a cut out of the cylindrical structure. In another option, the bottom end has a hexagonal cross section.

A blank for forming a food container includes a front panel with a front
25 panel side edge and a front panel bottom edge. The front panel is hingedly coupled with a back panel, which includes a back panel side edge and a back panel bottom edge. The front panel and the back panel each include bottom panels foldably coupled thereto.

A food container which is adapted to be inserted in a substantially
30 circular cup holder, includes an open top portion, and a bottom portion having a substantially circular first bottom panel. The food container further includes a

plurality of side panels forming an outer side surface, the plurality of side panels are disposed between the open top portion and the bottom portion. The bottom panel is foldably coupled with at least one of the side panels.

The food container includes a variety of options as follows. For instance,
5 the food container optionally is adapted to be folded flat. In another option, the bottom panel has a hexagonal shape, where there are further optionally eight side panels. In yet another option, the bottom panel has an elliptical shape. Regarding the side panels, one option is that each side panel has substantially the same width. In another option, a first side panel has a first width, and a second
10 side panel has a second width, and the first width is greater than the second width. Further options includes having one or more side panels recessed away from the open top portion, and forming a scoop.

Other alternatives are as follows. For instance, the food container optionally includes feet foldably coupled with one or more of the side panels.
15 Alternatively, the food container further includes a glue panel foldably coupled with at least one side panels.

A method of forming a food container adapted to be disposed in a substantially circular cup holder is also provided herein. The method includes folding a plurality of paperboard side panels foldably coupled to one another to
20 form a substantially cylindrical structure. The method further includes folding a bottom panel coupled with a side panel toward a bottom end of the cylindrical structure. Options for the method include further folding feet toward the bottom end, where the feet are coupled with the side panels.

Further included herein is a blank for forming a food container adapted to
25 be inserted in a substantially circular cup holder. The blank includes plurality of side panels foldably coupled with one another, the plurality of side panels extend from a top edge to a bottom edge. The blank further includes a substantially circular first bottom panel foldably coupled with the bottom edge of one of the side panels. The first bottom panel fold line is offset from the bottom edge of at
30 least one side panel.

Options for the blank are as follows. The blank optionally includes one or more foot panels foldably coupled with one or more side panels. In addition, the foot panels optionally have a substantially triangular shape.

In yet another option, a glue panel is coupled with one of the side panels. In
5 addition, one or more side panels have a first length, one or more side panels have a second length, and the first length is greater than the second length.

These and other embodiments, aspects, advantages, and features of the present invention will be set forth in part in the description which follows, and in part will become apparent to those skilled in the art by reference to the following
10 description of the invention and referenced drawings or by practice of the invention. The aspects, advantages, and features of the invention are realized and attained by means of the instrumentalities, procedures, and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims and their equivalents.

Brief Description of the Drawings

- | | | |
|----|-----------|--|
| 15 | Figure 1A | is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| | Figure 1B | is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| | Figure 1C | is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| 20 | Figure 2 | is a first side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| | Figure 3 | is a second side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| 25 | Figure 4 | is a bottom plan view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| | Figure 5 | is a top plan view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment. |
| 30 | | |

- Figure 6 is a side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 7 is a side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- 5 Figure 8 is a side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 9 is a side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 10 is a side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- 10 Figure 11 is a perspective view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 12 is a side elevational view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment.
- 15 Figure 13 is a bottom view of Figure 12.
- Figure 14 is a perspective view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 15 is a perspective view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- 20 Figure 16 is a perspective view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 17 is a perspective view illustrating a food container constructed in accordance with another embodiment.
- Figure 18 is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment.
- 25 Figure 19 is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment.
- Figure 20 is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment.
- 30 Figure 21 is a plan view illustrating a blank for a food container constructed in accordance with one embodiment.

Description of the Embodiments

In the following detailed description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that structural changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. Therefore, the following detailed description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined by the appended claims and their equivalents.

A blank 100 for a food container (Figures 2 - 10) is illustrated in Figure 1A. The blank 100 includes a front panel 110 which is defined in part by an inner surface 112 and an outer surface 114. The blank 100 is formed of a plurality of paperboard panels. The front panel 110 is further defined by a top edge 116 and a bottom edge 118. Disposed along the bottom edge 118 are container feet 120. The front panel 110 is further defined by a first side edge 122 and a second side edge 124, where a back panel 140 is hingedly coupled with the second side edge 124.

A first bottom panel 126 is hingedly coupled along a bottom panel fold line 136 which is offset from the bottom edge 118 of the front panel 110. Optionally, the first bottom panel 126 has a generally hexagonal shape and/or folding panels 128, 130. The first and second folding panels 128, 130 are hingedly coupled with the first bottom panel 126. The first and second folding panels 128, 130 beneficially assist to stiffen first bottom panel 126 and also prevent granular portions from falling out the food container. The first bottom panel 126 further includes a tab 132 which extends from an edge 134 of the first bottom panel 126.

The back panel 140 is defined by a top edge 142, a bottom edge 144, a first side edge 146, and a second side edge 148. The back panel 140 is hingedly coupled with the front panel 110 such that the first side edge 146 of the back panel 140 is disposed adjacent to the second side edge 124 of the front panel

110. The back panel 140 has a glue panel 150 hingedly coupled thereto along the second side edge 148. The glue panel 150 is coupled with a surface of the front panel 110, for instance, the inner surface 112 of the front panel 110, as will be described in further detail below. Alternatively, the glue panel 150 is
5 hingedly coupled with the front panel 110 and is attached to a surface of the back panel 140, such as a back panel outer surface (Figure 1B).

The back panel 140 includes a center back panel 152, a first side back panel 154, and a second side back panel 156. The first side back panel 154 is hingedly coupled with the center back panel 152 along a first fold line 160. The
10 second side back panel 156 is hingedly coupled with the center back panel 152 along a second fold line 158, where the center back panel 152 is disposed between the first side back panel 154 and the second side back panel 156.

Disposed along a bottom panel fold line 162 of the back panel 140 is a second bottom panel 164, where the bottom panel fold line 162 is offset from
15 the bottom edge 144 of the back panel 140. The second bottom panel 164 includes a glue panel 166 which is hingedly coupled with the second bottom panel 164. The glue panel 166 allows for the second bottom panel 164 to be coupled with the first bottom panel 126, as discussed further below. Disposed between the second bottom panel 164 and the center back panel 152 is a cut out
20 168. The cut out 168 is adapted to receive therein the tab 132 of the first bottom panel 126. Disposed adjacent to the cut out 168 on the center back panel 152 is a vertical cut line 163. The vertical cut line 163 allows for the cut out 168 to expand as the tab 132 is being received therein.

The center back panel 152 also includes a condiment holder fold line
25 170, where the center back panel 152 is defined by the first fold line 158, the second fold line 160, the bottom panel fold line 162, and the condiment holder fold line 170. A condiment holder 172 is hingedly coupled with the center back panel 152 of the back panel 140 along the condiment holder fold line 170. The condiment holder 172 includes a center panel 176 and a condiment panel 174.
30 With the exception of the condiment holder fold line 170, the condiment panel 174 is surrounded by perforated line 177. In addition, the center panel 176 is

surrounded in part by the condiment panel 174, and separated therebetween by a perforated line 178.

The method of forming a food container adapted to be disposed in a substantially circular cup holder is as follows. The method includes folding a plurality of paperboard side panels foldably coupled to one another to form a substantially cylindrical structure, and folding a bottom panel coupled with a side panel toward a bottom end of the cylindrical structure. Optionally, the method further includes folding feet toward the bottom end, where the feet are coupled with the side panels. In another option, to form the container 200, as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, from the blank 100 of Figure 1A, the glue panel 166 of the second bottom panel 164 is folded at 162 and coupled with a bottom surface of the first bottom panel 126. The glue panel 166 can be secured using a number of manners including, but not limited to, adhesive, mechanical fasteners, etc. The glue panel 150, which is coupled with the second side edge 148 of the back panel 140, is coupled with the inner surface 112 of the front panel 110. As discussed above, the glue panel 150 can be hingedly coupled with the front panel 110, and for either, can be coupled with either the inner surface or the outer surface of the front or back panels 110, 140. The glue panel 150 can be secured using a number of manners including, but not limited to, adhesive, mechanical fasteners, etc. Optionally, the glue panel 166, the second bottom panel, and the first bottom panel 126 are folded up inside of the container 200, as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Force is applied at 205 to the first side edge 122, the second side edge 148, and the second side edge 124, and first side edge 146. As the force is applied at 205, the container 200 opens such that a bottom end 210 of the container 200 has a generally circular base, as shown in Figure 4. Optionally, the bottom end 210 has a hexagonal shape to form the generally circular base, as further discussed below. The number of panels and fold lines for the front panel 110 and/or the back panel 140 can be varied to form the generally circular base. In another alternative, the bottom end 210 has a substantially oval base

(Figure 1C). The container 200 is fully erected by pressing inwardly at 205, and it is not necessary to apply additional force to the bottom panels.

The front panel 110 and back panel 140 curve to form a generally cylindrical structure 212, which optionally includes generally conical structures.

5 The first bottom panel 126 is pulled by the second panel 164 toward the bottom end 210 of the container 200. The tab 132 is inserted into the cut out 168, such that the tab 132 is secured within the cut out 168, and the first bottom panel 126 is secured to the back panel 140. Thus, the first bottom panel 126 is hingedly coupled with the front panel 110, is secured to the back panel 140 by the tab
10 132, and is further supported by the second bottom panel 164. The container 200 has a generally cylindrical structure having an outer side surface 214 and a bottom-end 210. Contents disposed within the container 200 are supported by first and second bottom panels 126, 164, as well as front panel 110 and back panel 140, as shown in Figures 6 and 7.

15 A condiment holder 230 is coupled with the outer side surface 214 such that the user has simultaneous access to both the container 200 and the condiment holder 230. Optionally, the condiment holder 230 is foldably coupled with the outer side surface 214. For instance, to form the condiment holder 230, the condiment panel 174 is removed from the perforated line 177.
20 The condiment panel 174 and the center panel 176 are folded away from the back panel 140 toward the outer side surface 214, such that a cut out 232 is formed in the back panel 140, as shown in Figure 8. The center panel 176 is removed from the perforated line 178 and folded further toward the outer side surface 214, as shown in Figure 9. The removal of the center panel 176 forms
25 an opening 234 in the condiment panel 174, such that a tub of condiment 240 can be disposed therethrough, as shown in Figure 10. Optionally, the center panel 176 remains in a vertical position and the condiment panel 174 is folded down. This would assist in preventing food from exiting the food container 200.

30 Further embodiments of the food container are shown in Figures 11 - 17. Referring to Figures 11 and 14, a food container 300 includes an open top

portion 310 and a bottom portion 312. Optionally, the top portion 310 has a different cross section than the bottom portion 312. The open top portion 310 is adapted to receive food therein. The bottom portion 312 is adapted to hold food within the food container 300, and is adapted to be received by a substantially
5 circular cup holder. The bottom portion 312 includes a substantially circular first bottom panel 314. Optionally, the first bottom panel 314 has any number of sides such as five, six, seven, eight or more sides. Alternatively, the first bottom panel 314 has an elliptical shape.

The food container 300 further contains a plurality of side panels 316,
10 which are disposed between the top and bottom portions 310, 312. The plurality of side panels 316 are foldably coupled to one another along side fold lines 318. It should be noted that the number of side panels can be varied as shown, for instance, the several drawings. In one configuration, as shown in Figure 11, the food container 300 includes eight side panels 316, which assist in
15 forming the bottom portion to configure with the circular cup holder. In another option, as shown in Figure 14, the food container 300 includes six side panels 316. The width and the length of the side panels can be varied to achieve other options of the food container. For instance, in one option, one or more of the side panels 316 is wider than the others. Optionally, the food container 300
20 further includes an attachment panel, such as a glue panel, as further discussed below, which is coupled with at least one of the side panels.

Figures 12 and 13 show an alternative food container 350, where the food container 350 is adapted to be folded flat. It should be noted that any of the above below shown and/or discussed food containers can be folded in to a
25 flat preformed state, which is how the containers would be shipped to end users, for example, fast food restaurants. As shown in Figure 12, the food container 350 optionally includes feet 352 coupled therewith, which will be further discussed below.

Figures 15 - 17 illustrate alternative food containers. A food container
30 400 includes an open top portion 410 and a bottom portion 412. Optionally, the top portion 410 has a different cross section than the bottom portion 412, and

the open top portion 410 is adapted to receive food therein. The bottom portion 412 is adapted to hold food within the food container 400, and is adapted to be received by a substantially circular cup holder. The bottom portion 412 includes a substantially circular first bottom panel (Figure 11). Optionally, the
5 first bottom panel has any number of sides such as five, six, seven, eight or more sides. Alternatively, the first bottom panel has an elliptical shape.

The food container 400 further contains a plurality of side panels 416, which are disposed between the top and bottom portions 410, 412. The plurality of side panels 416 are foldably coupled to one another along side fold
10 lines 418. It should be noted that the number of side panels can be varied as shown, for instance, the several drawings. In one configuration, as shown in Figure 15, the food container 400 includes eight side panels 416, which assist in forming the bottom portion 412 to configure with the circular cup holder. In another option, as shown in Figure 17, the food container 400 includes six side
15 panels 416. The width and the length of the side panels can be varied to achieve other options of the food container. For instance, the width of one or more of the side panels 416 is greater than other side panels 416. In another example, in one option, the length of one or more of the side panels 416 is recessed away from the top portion, forming a recessed portion 406. Having one or more of
20 the side panels recessed from the top allows for the food container 400 to become a scoop, thereby facilitating filling the food container with its contents, for example, fries.

Figures 18 - 21 illustrate a variety of blanks which can be used to form the food containers as included in the scope of the application, some of which
25 have been described above. Referring to Figure 18, a blank for a food container 500 includes a plurality of side panels 510 foldably coupled with one another along fold lines 512. The fold lines 512 optionally comprise partially perforated lines. The side panels 510 each extend from a top end 514 to a bottom end 516. The top end 514 of the side panels 510 form the top open
30 portion of the food container, as discussed above. A generally circular first bottom panel 520 is foldably coupled with the bottom end 516 of one or more

of the side panels 510 along a bottom panel fold line 522. The generally circular first bottom panel 520 has a variety of shapes, as will be further discussed below. In one example, the first bottom panel 520 has a hexagonal shape. In one option, the bottom panel fold line 522 is offset from a bottom end 516 of an adjacent side panel.

Optionally, a second bottom panel 524 is coupled with one or more of the side panels 510. In yet another option, a third bottom panel 528 is coupled with the second bottom panel 524. Portions of the second bottom panel 524 and/or the third bottom panel 528 are adapted to be coupled with the first bottom panel 520. In yet a further option, an attachment panel 530 is coupled with one or more of the side panels. The attachment panel 530 allows for the blank 500 to be secured into a substantially cylindrical structure. In one example, the attachment panel comprises a glue panel.

Figure 19 shows another option for a blank for a food container 600. A blank for a food container 600 includes a plurality of side panels 610 foldably coupled with one another along fold lines 612. The fold lines 612 optionally comprise partially perforated lines. The side panels 610 each extend from a top end 614 to a bottom end 616. The top end 614 of the side panels 610 form the top open portion of the food container, as discussed above. Optionally, one or more side panels are recessed away from the top open portion to form a recessed portion 618. The recessed portion 618 allows for the food container to be used as a scoop, as discussed above.

A generally circular first bottom panel 620 is foldably coupled with the bottom end 616 of one or more of the side panels 610 along a bottom panel fold line 622. The generally circular first bottom panel 620 has a variety of shapes, as will be further discussed below. In one example, the first bottom panel 620 has a hexagonal shape. In one option, the bottom panel fold line 622 is offset from a bottom end 616 of an adjacent side panel.

Optionally, a second bottom panel 624 is coupled with one or more of the side panels 610. For instance, the second bottom panel 624 is coupled along a second bottom panel fold line 625. In yet another option, a third bottom panel

628 is coupled with the second bottom panel 624. Portions of the second bottom panel 624 and/or the third bottom panel 628 are adapted to be coupled with the first bottom panel 620. In yet a further option, an attachment panel 630 is coupled with one or more of the side panels. The attachment panel 630
5 allows for the blank 600 to be secured into a substantially cylindrical structure. In one example, the attachment panel comprises a glue panel.

Figure 20 shows another option for a blank for a food container 700. A blank for a food container 700 includes a plurality of side panels 710 foldably coupled with one another along fold lines 712. The fold lines 712 optionally
10 comprise partially perforated lines. The side panels 710 each extend from a top end 714 to a bottom end 716. Optionally, one or more of the side panels 710 has a greater width than the other side panels 710. The top end 714 of the side panels 710 form the top open portion of the food container, as discussed above. Optionally, one or more side panels are recessed away from the top open
15 portion to form a recessed portion 718. The recessed portion 718 allows for the food container to be used as a scoop, as discussed above.

A generally circular first bottom panel 720 is foldably coupled with the bottom end 716 of one or more of the side panels 710 along a bottom panel fold line 722. The generally circular first bottom panel 720 has a variety of shapes,
20 as will be further discussed below. In one example, the first bottom panel 720 has an elliptical shape. In one option, the bottom panel fold line 722 is slightly offset from a bottom end 716 of an adjacent side panel.

Optionally, a second bottom panel 724 is coupled with one or more of the side panels 710. For instance, the second bottom panel 724 is coupled along
25 a second bottom panel fold line 725. Portions of the second bottom panel 724 are optionally adapted to be coupled with or lie adjacent to the first bottom panel 720 when the food container is assembled. In yet a further option, a first attachment panel 730 is coupled with one or more of the side panels 710. As another option, a second attachment panel 732 is coupled with one or more of
30 the side panels 710. The attachment panel 730 or 732 allows for the blank 700 to be secured into a substantially cylindrical structure, although the food

container could be assembled in other manners. In one example, the attachment panel 730 or 732 comprises a glue panel.

Figure 21 shows another option for a blank for a food container 800. A blank for a food container 800 includes a plurality of side panels 810 foldably coupled with one another along fold lines 812. The fold lines 812 optionally comprise partially perforated lines. The side panels 810 each extend from a top end 814 to a bottom end 816. In one option, the bottom end 816 of one or more of the side panels 810 includes a foot 808 foldably coupled therewith. In another option, the foot 808 has a triangular shape. One example of a foot 808, includes a plurality of feet 806, where two feet 806 are foldably coupled together, and are foldably coupled to two adjacent side panels 810. The top end 814 of the side panels 810 form the top open portion of the food container, as discussed above. Optionally, one or more side panels are recessed away from the top open portion to form a recessed portion 818. The recessed portion 818 allows for the food container to be used as a scoop, as discussed above.

A generally circular first bottom panel 820 is foldably coupled with the bottom end 816 of one or more of the side panels 810 along a bottom panel fold line 822. The generally circular first bottom panel 820 has a variety of shapes, as will be further discussed below. In one example, the first bottom panel 820 has a hexagonal shape. In one option, the bottom panel fold line 822 is offset from a bottom end 816 of an adjacent side panel.

Optionally, a second bottom panel 824 is coupled with one or more of the side panels 810. For instance, the second bottom panel 824 is coupled along a second bottom panel fold line 825. In yet another option, a third bottom panel 828 is coupled with the second bottom panel 824. Portions of the second bottom panel 824 and/or the third bottom panel 828 are adapted to be coupled with the first bottom panel 820. In yet a further option, an attachment panel 830 is coupled with one or more of the side panels. The attachment panel 830 allows for the blank 800 to be secured into a substantially cylindrical structure. In one example, the attachment panel comprises a glue panel.

Advantageously, the structure of the food container allows for it to be used conveniently in a cup holder, for instance, in an automobile. The condiment holder further allows a consumer to use the food container without having to separately hold or fumble with a condiment. In addition, the
5 condiment is held by the food container, and does not prevent the food container from being used in the cup holder.

It is to be understood that the above description is intended to be illustrative, and not restrictive. Many other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reading and understanding the above description.
10 The scope of the invention should, therefore, be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

What is claimed is:

1. A food container adapted to be inserted in a substantially circular cup holder, the food container comprising:
 - an open top portion;
 - a bottom portion including a substantially circular first bottom panel;
 - a plurality of side panels forming an outer side surface, the plurality of side panels disposed between the open top portion and the bottom portion; and
 - the bottom panel foldably coupled with at least one of the side panels.
2. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein the food container is adapted to be folded flat.
3. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein the bottom panel has a hexagonal shape.
4. The food container as recited in claim 3, wherein the plurality of side panels includes eight side panels.
5. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein the bottom panel has an elliptical shape.
6. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein each side panel has substantially the same width.
7. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein a first side panel has a first width, and a second side panel has a second width, and the first width is greater than the second width.
8. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein one or more side panels is recessed away from the open top portion, and forming a scoop.

9. The food container as recited in claim 1, further comprising feet foldably coupled with one or more of the side panels.
10. The food container as recited in claim 1, further comprising a glue panel foldably coupled with at least one side panels.
11. The food container as recited in claim 1, wherein the open top portion has a different cross section than the bottom portion.
12. The food container as recited in claim 1, further comprising a second bottom panel foldably coupled with a side panel.
13. The food container as recited in claim 12, wherein the second bottom panel is coupled with the first bottom panel.
14. A method of forming a food container adapted to be disposed in a substantially circular cup holder, the method comprising:
 - folding a plurality of paperboard side panels foldably coupled to one another to form a substantially cylindrical structure; and
 - folding a bottom panel coupled with a side panel toward a bottom end of the cylindrical structure.
15. The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising folding feet toward the bottom end, where the feet are coupled with the side panels.
16. A blank for forming a food container adapted to be inserted in a substantially circular cup holder, the blank comprising:
 - a plurality of side panels foldably coupled with one another, the plurality of side panels extending from a top edge to a bottom edge;
 - a substantially circular first bottom panel foldably coupled with the bottom edge of one of the side panels;

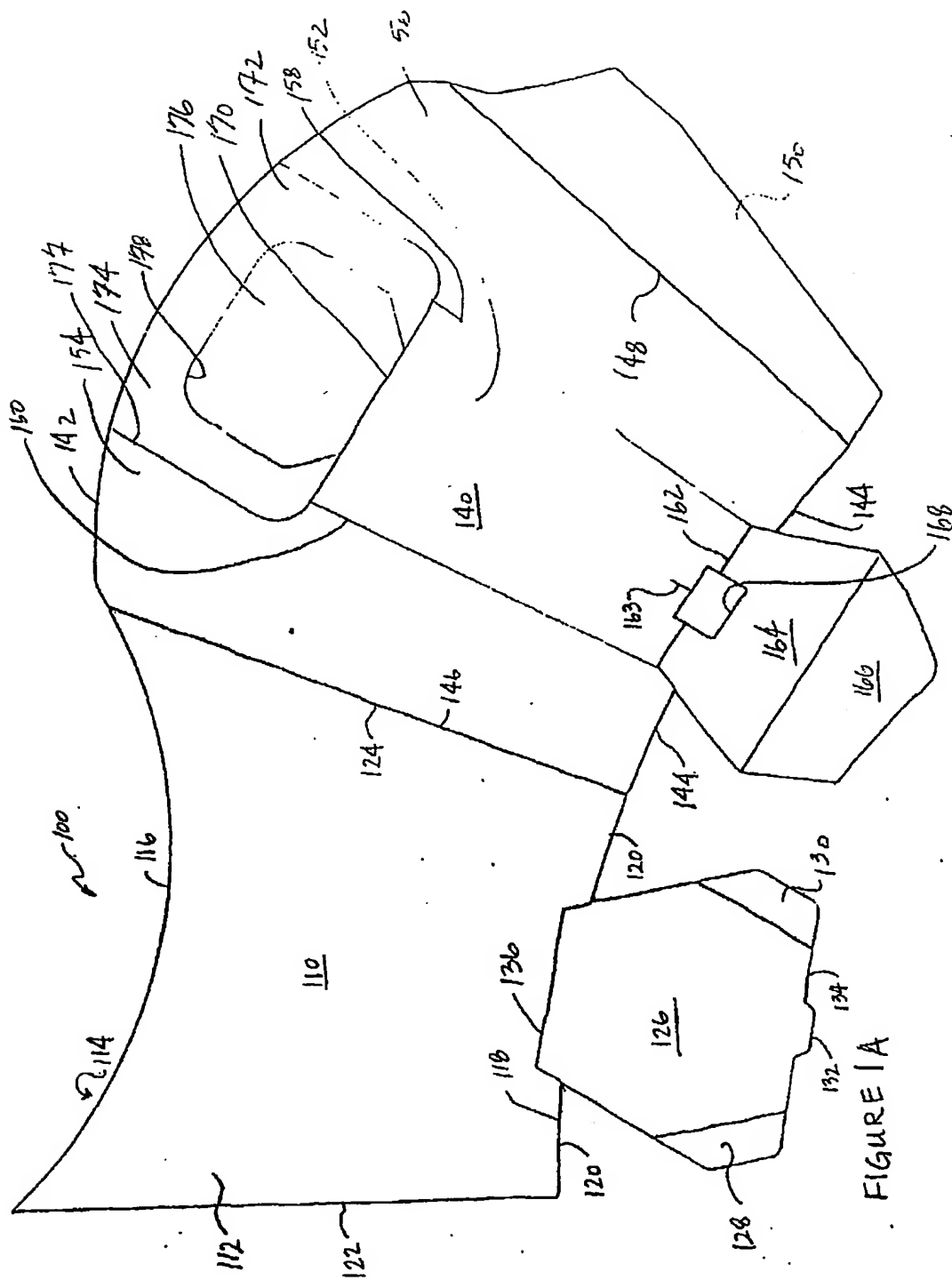
wherein the first bottom panel fold line is offset from the bottom edge of at least one side panel.

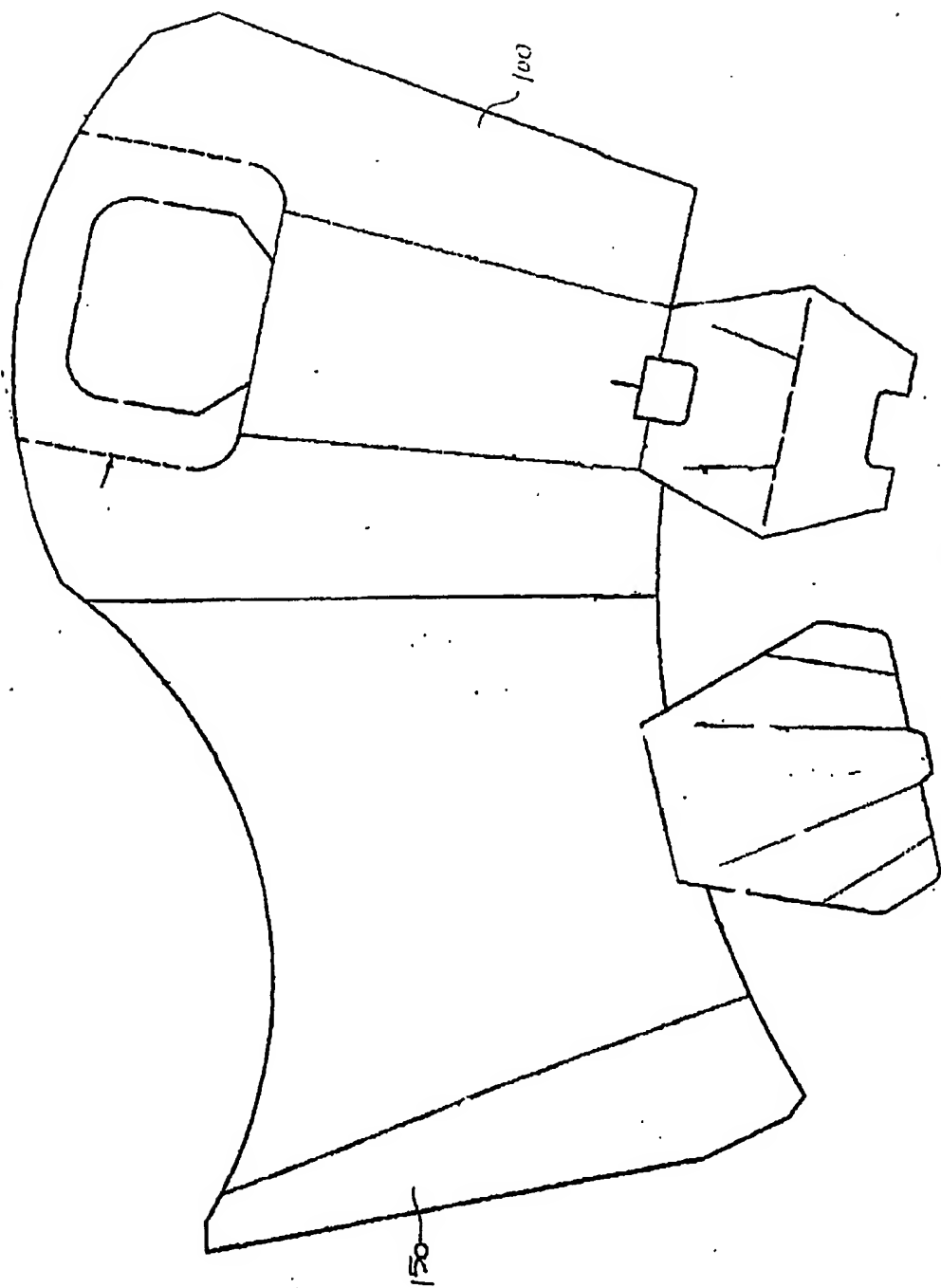
17. The blank as recited in claim 16, further comprising one or more foot panels foldably coupled with one or more side panels.

18. The blank as recited in claim 17, wherein the foot panels have a substantially triangular shape.

19. The blank as recited in claim 16, further comprising an attachment panel coupled with one of the side panels.

20. The blank as recited in claim 16, wherein one or more side panels have a first length, one or more side panels have a second length, and the first length is greater than the second length.





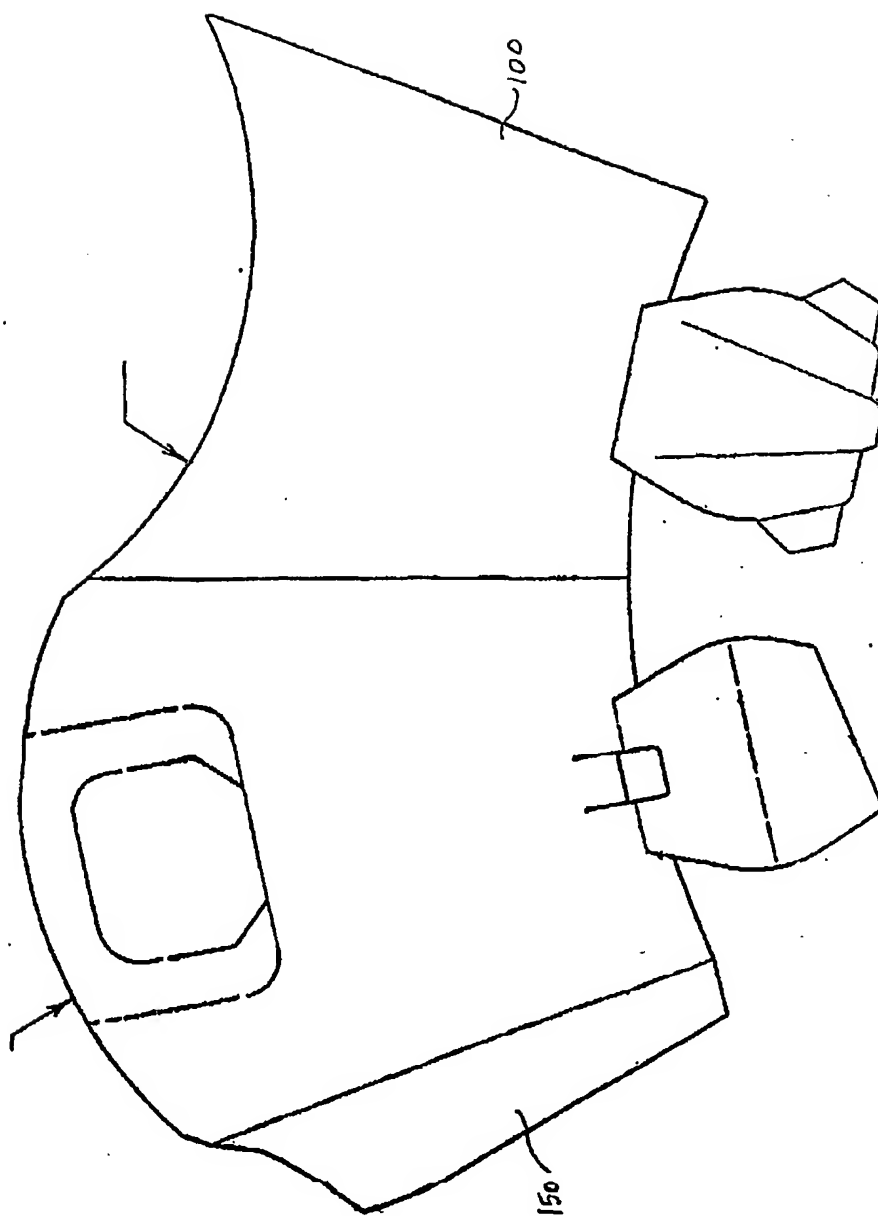


FIGURE 1C

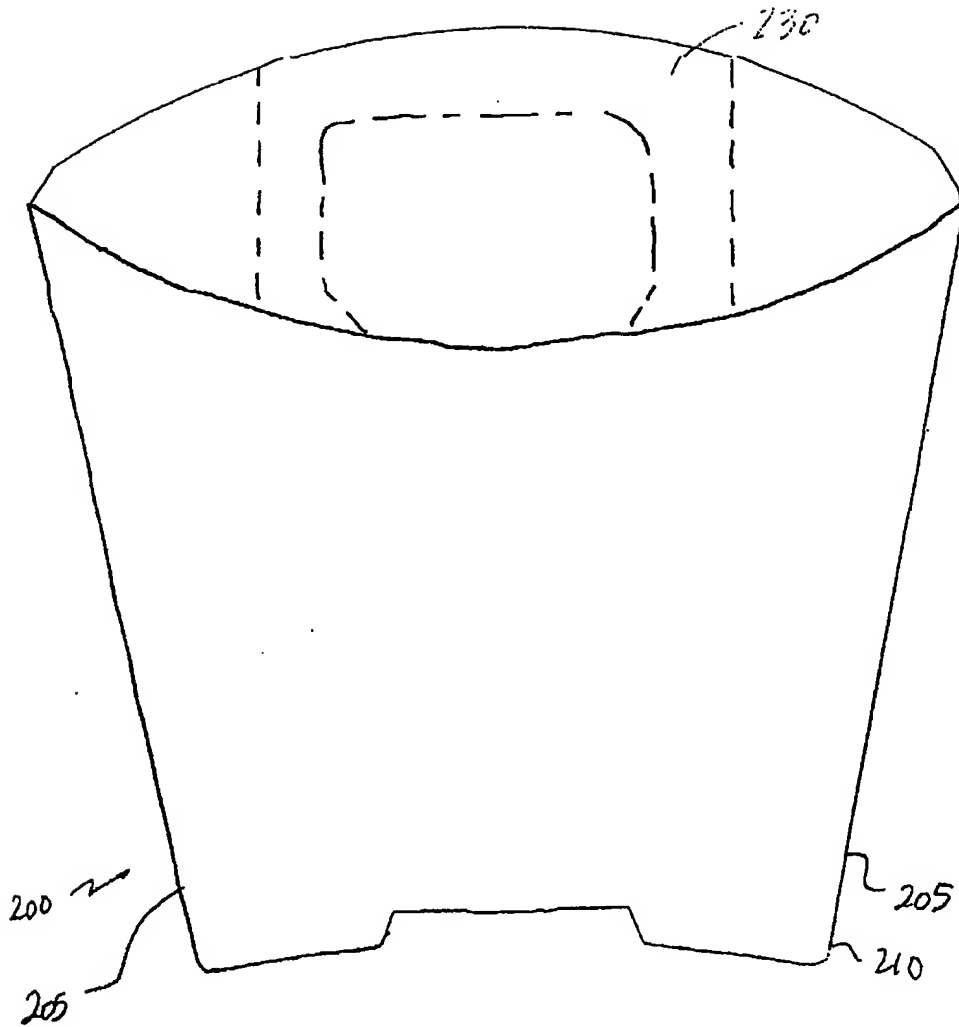


FIGURE 2

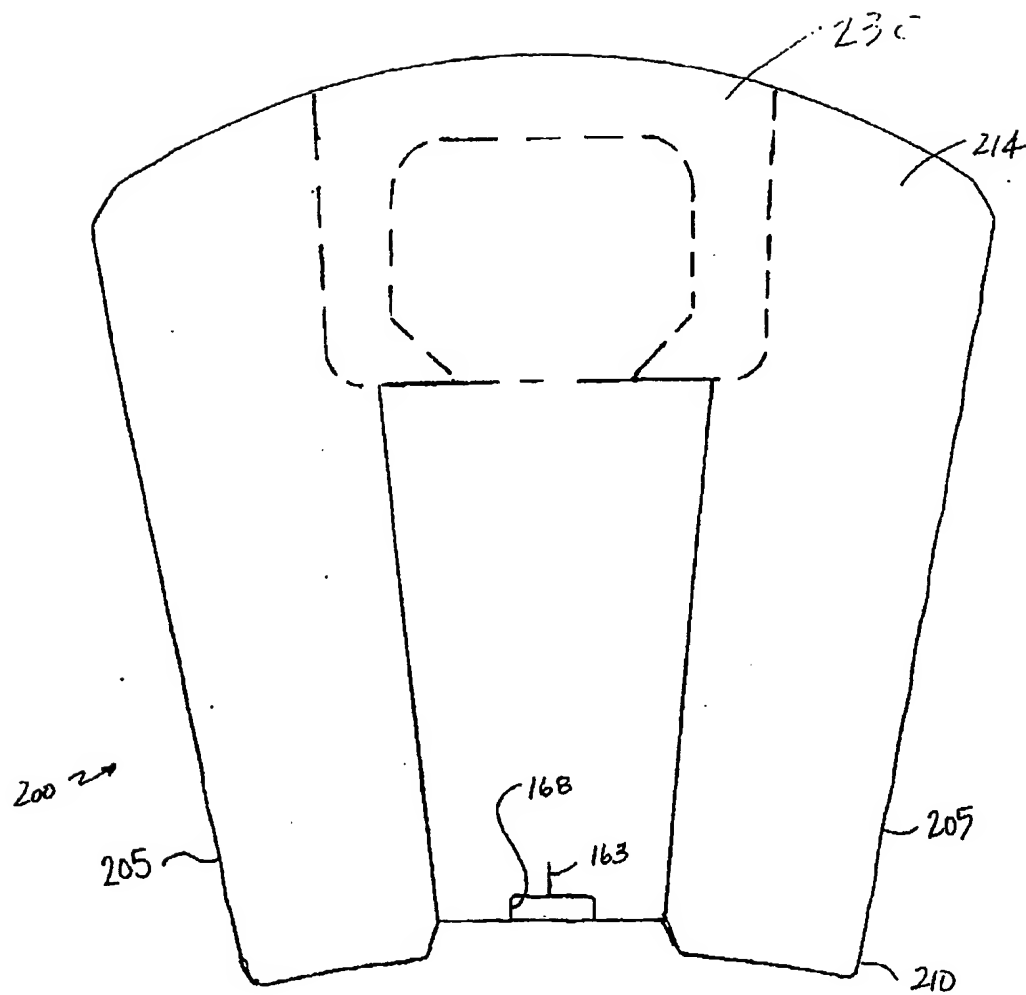


FIGURE 3

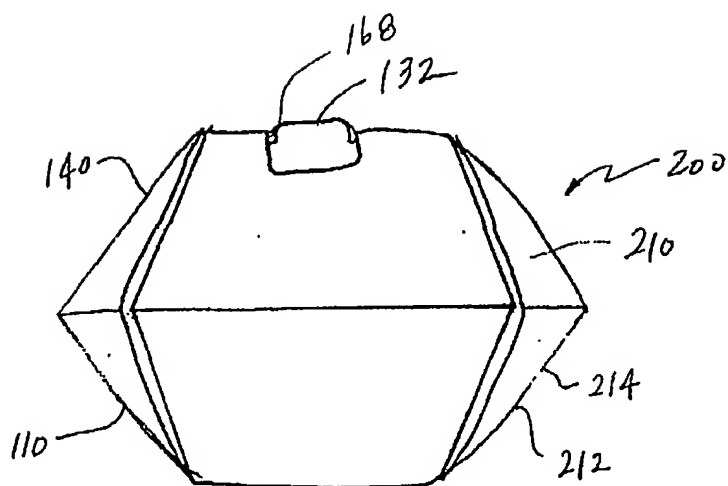


FIGURE 4

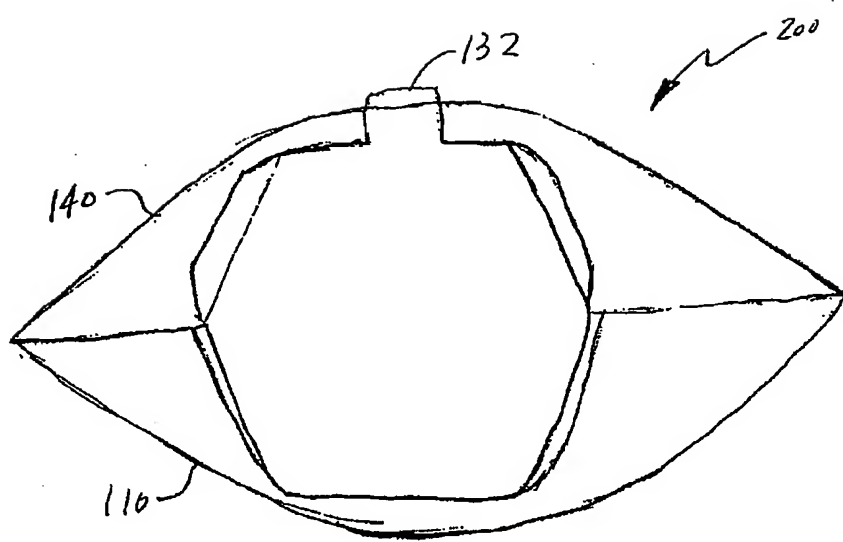


FIGURE 5

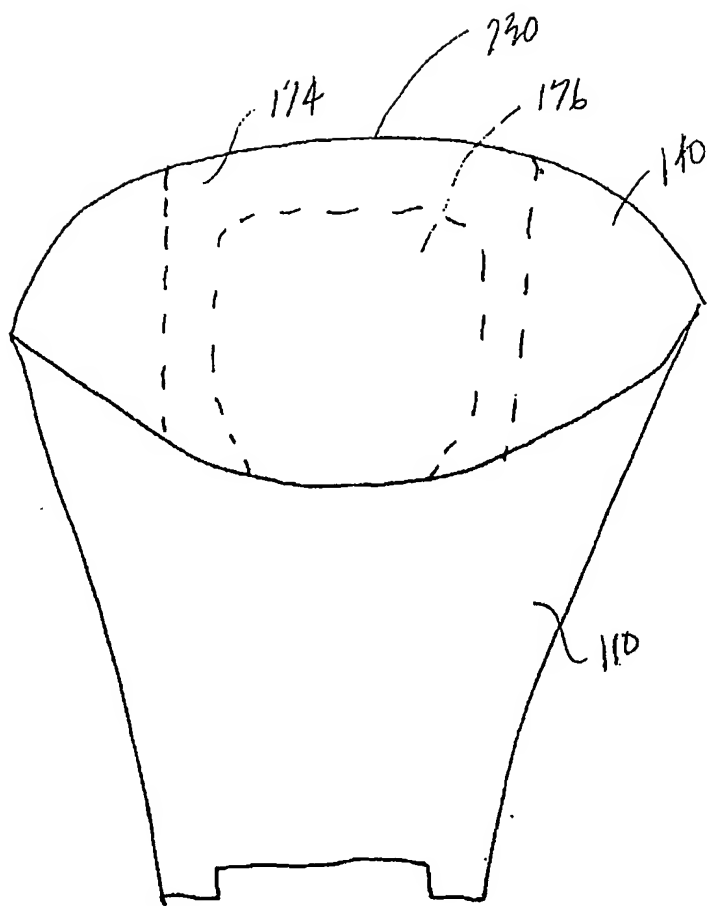


FIGURE 6

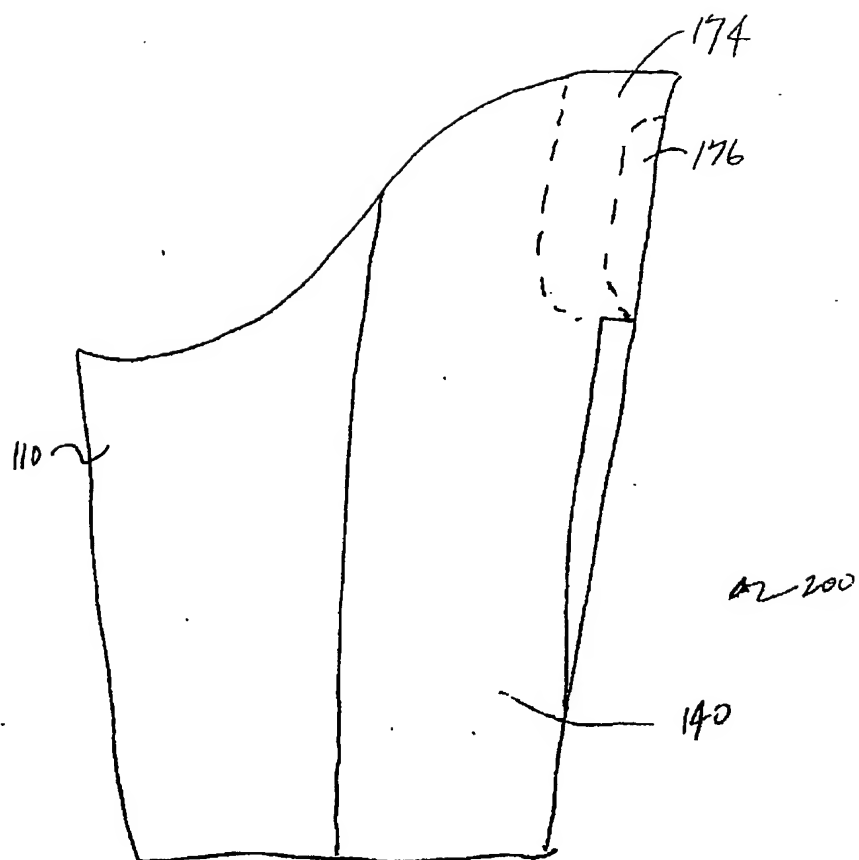


FIGURE 7

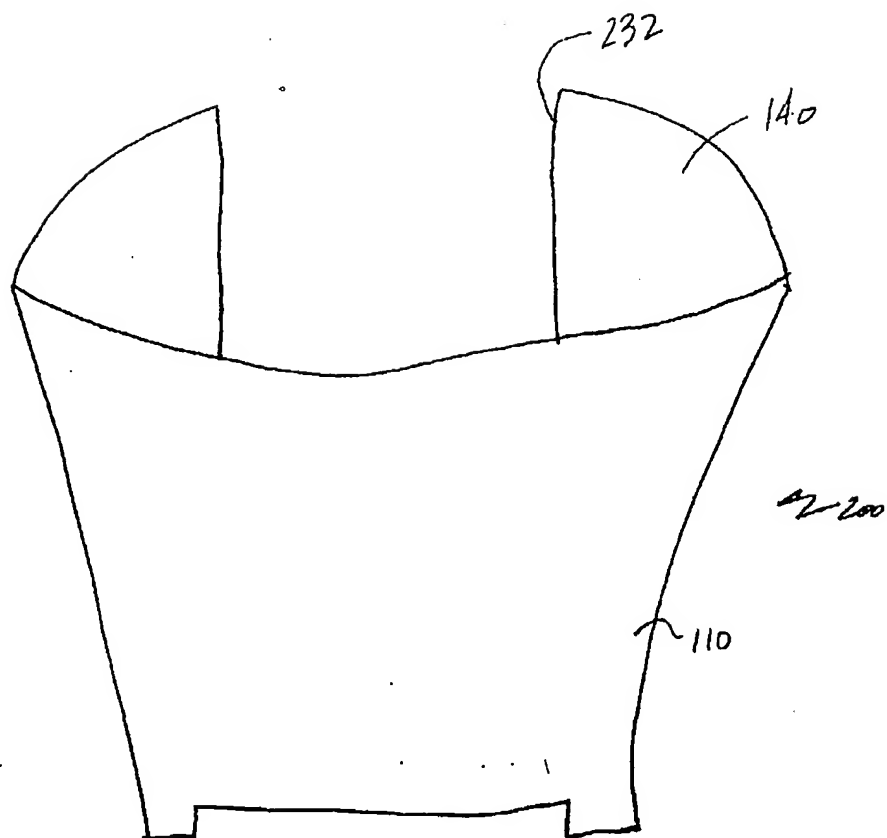


FIGURE 8

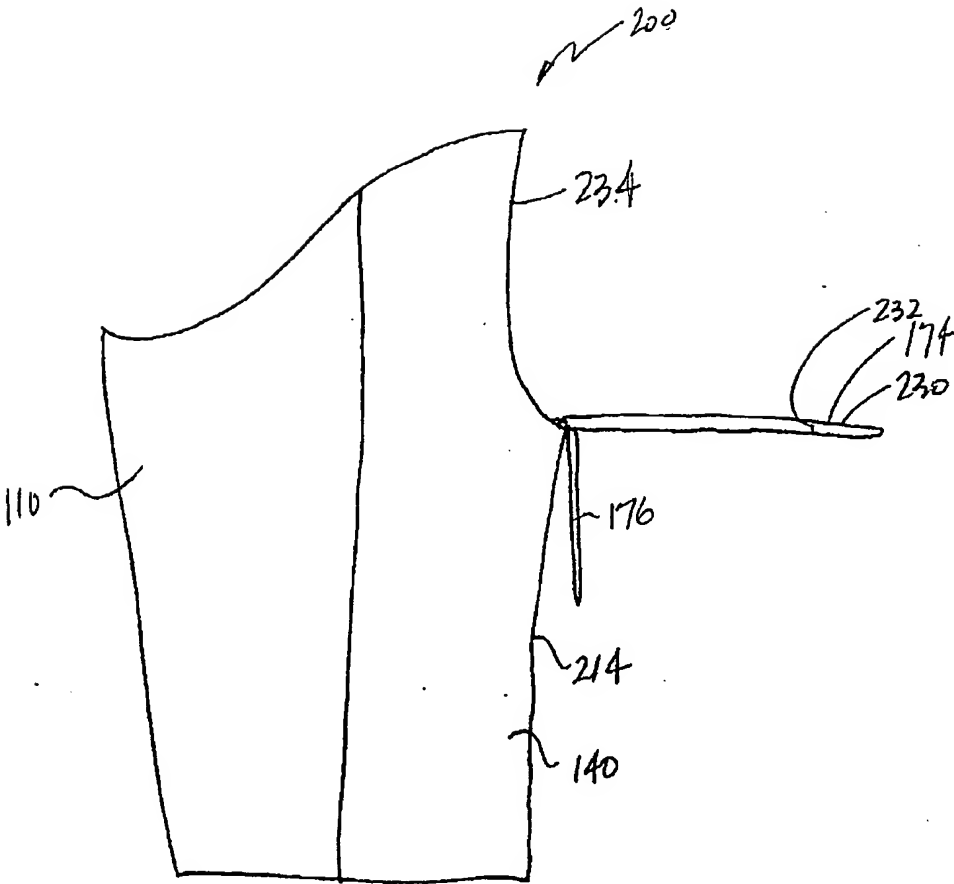


FIGURE 9

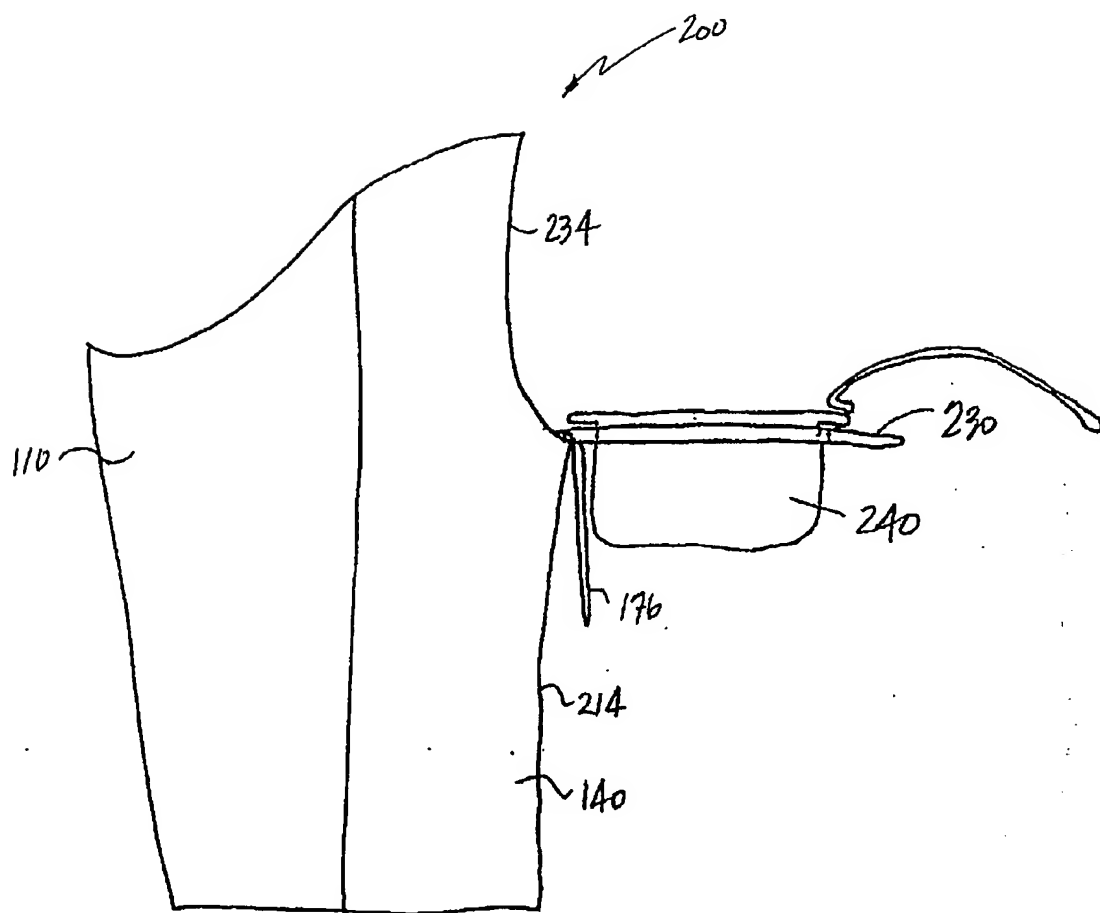


FIGURE 10

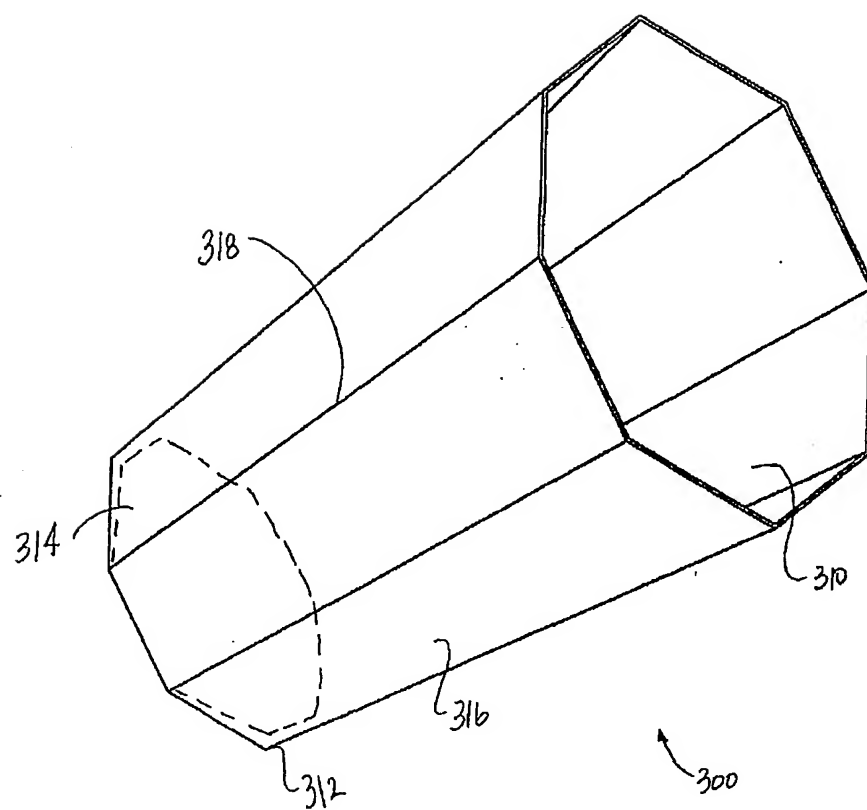
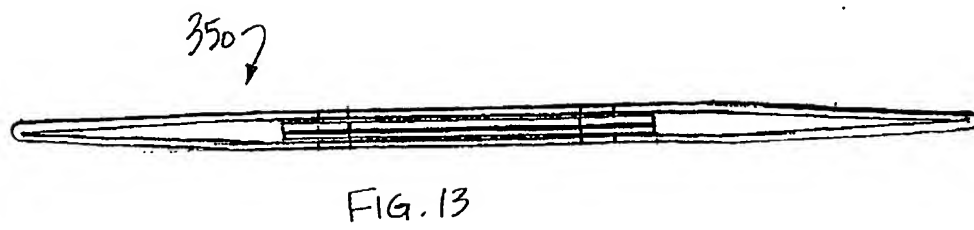
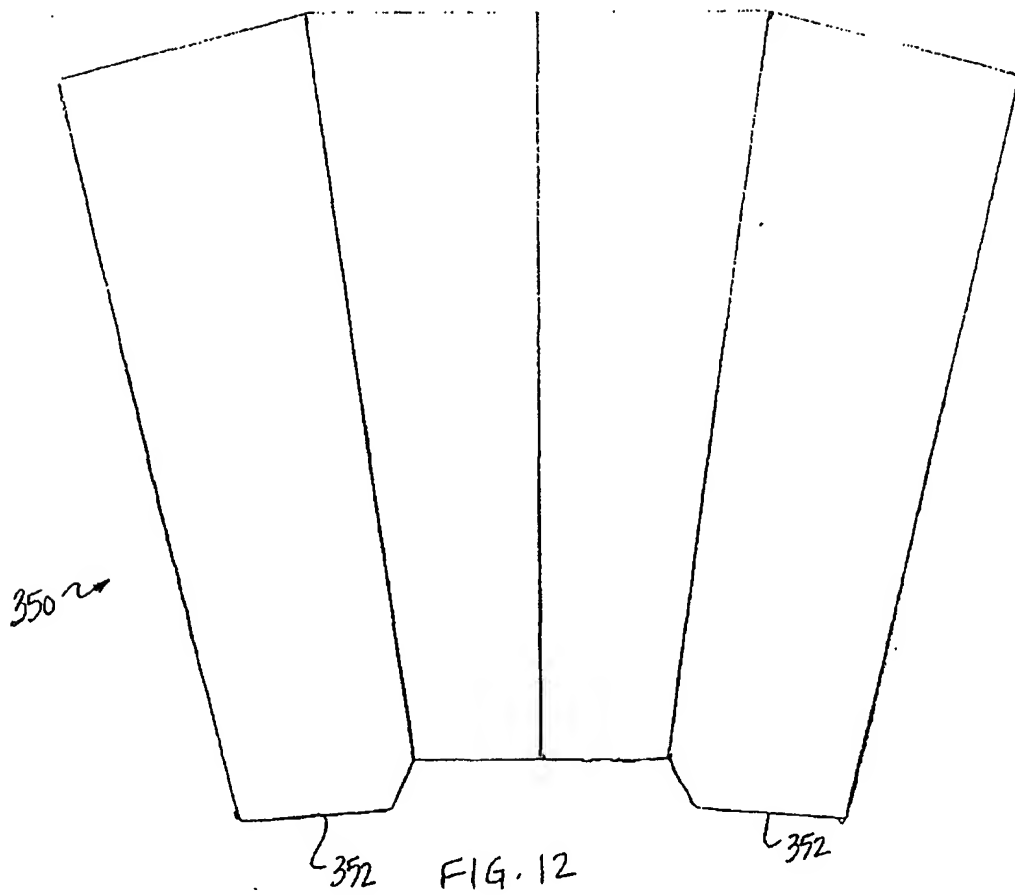


FIG. 11



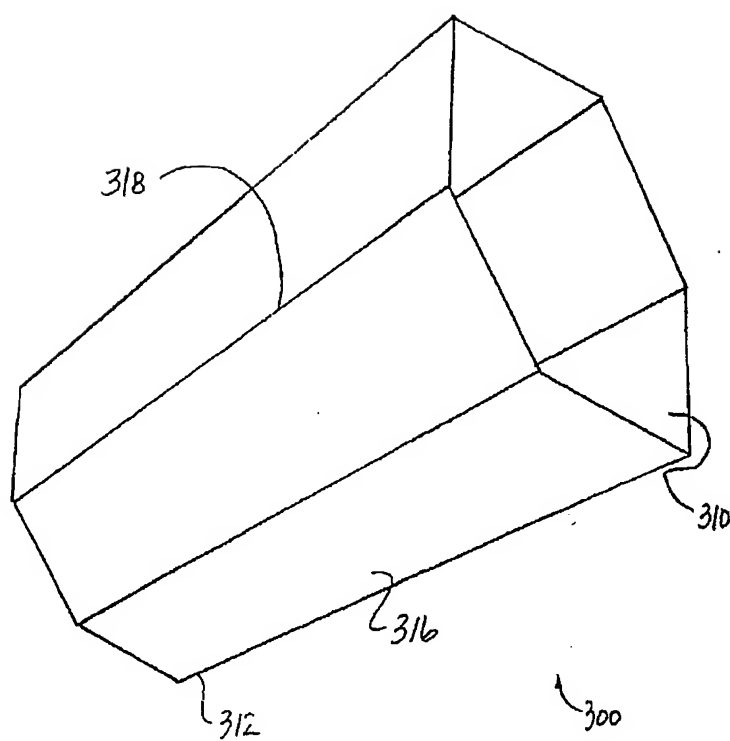


FIG. 14

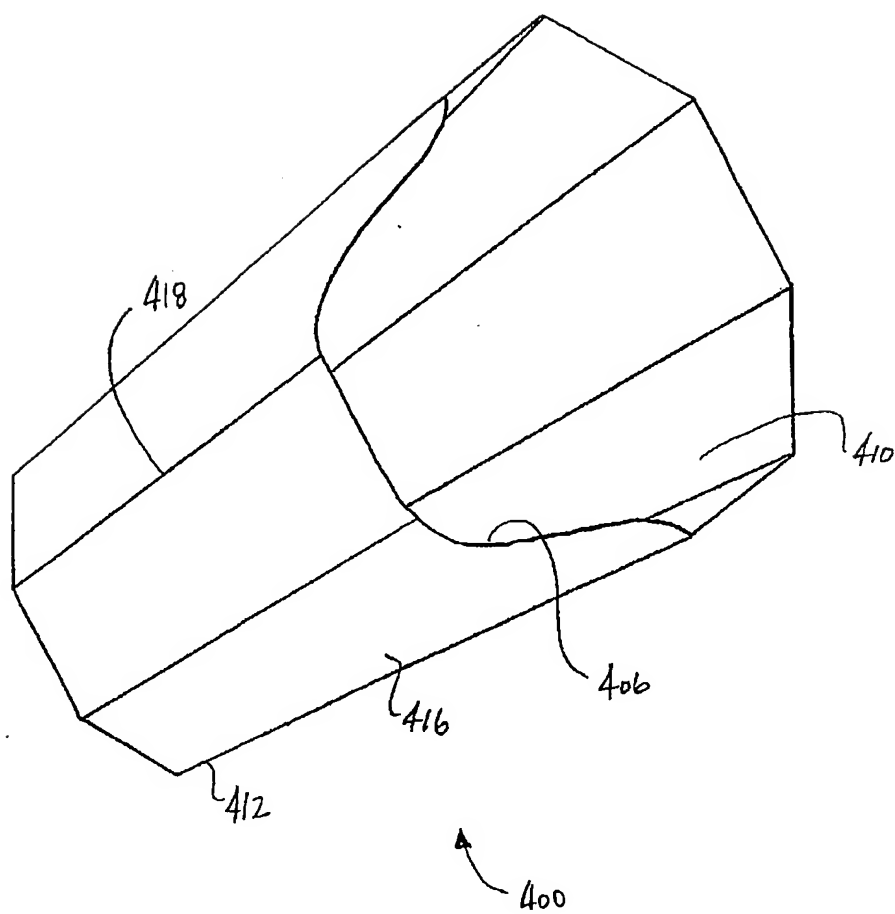


FIG. 15

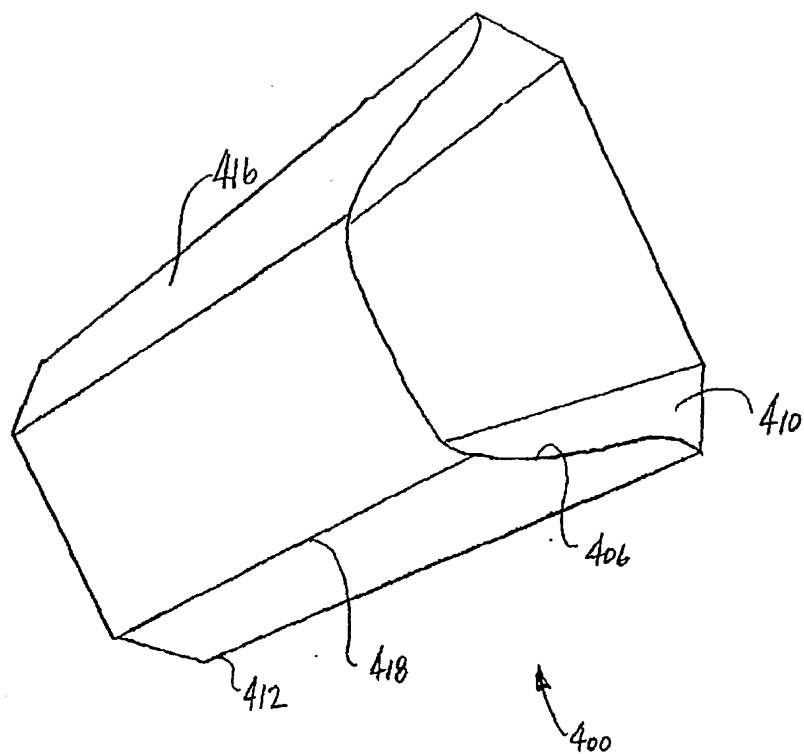


FIG. 16

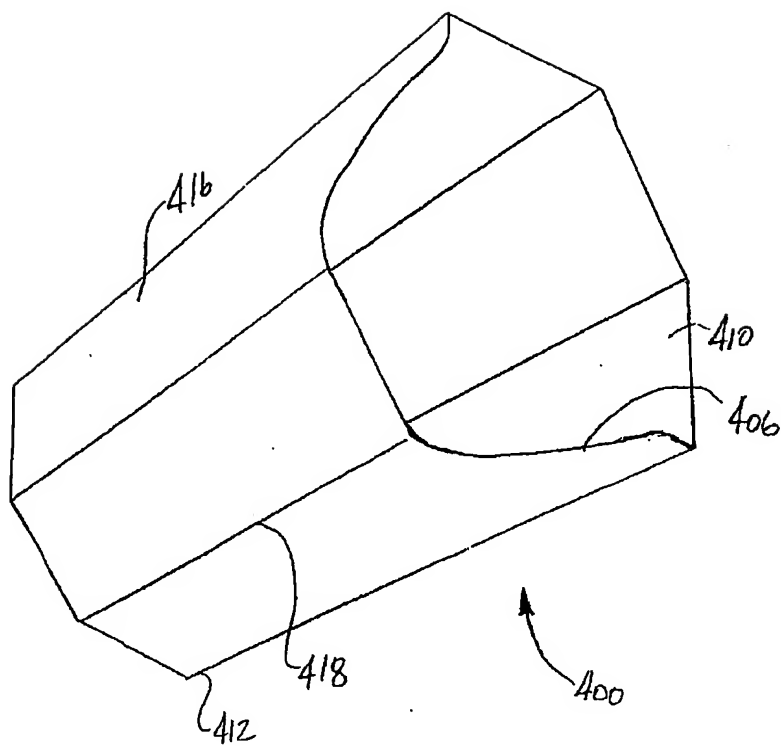


FIG. 17

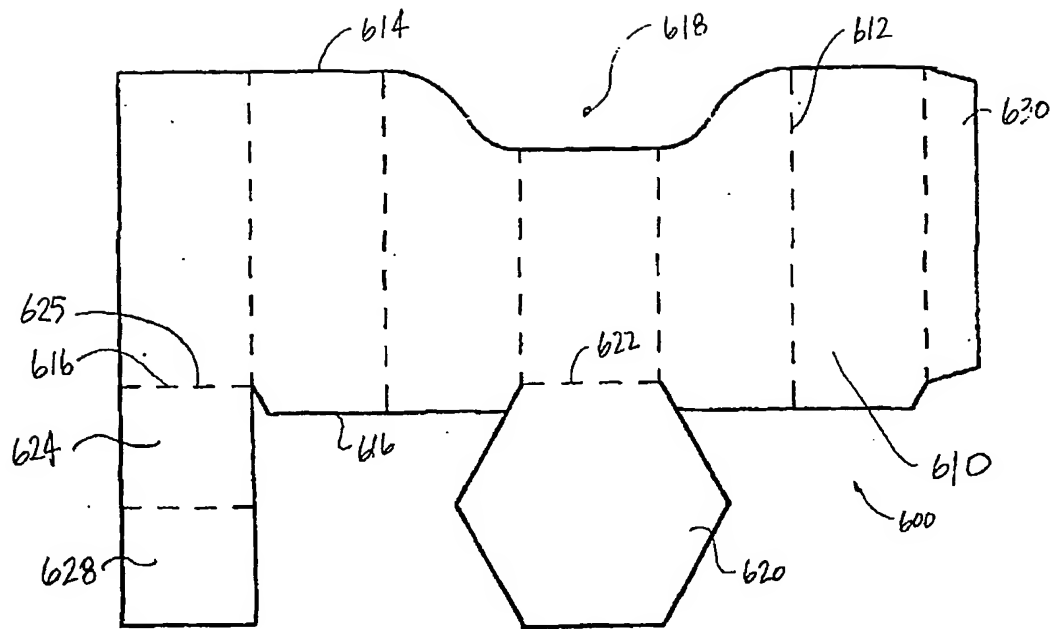


FIG. 19

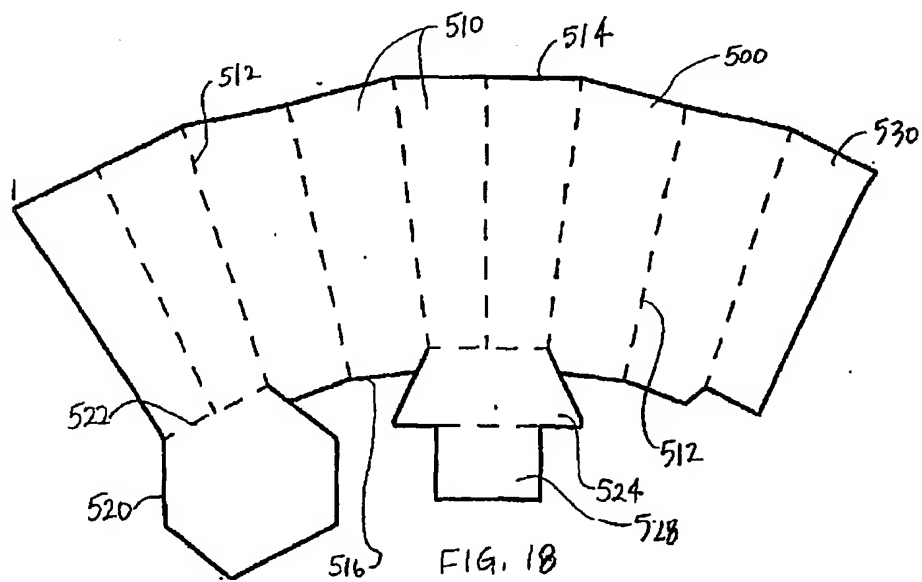


FIG. 18

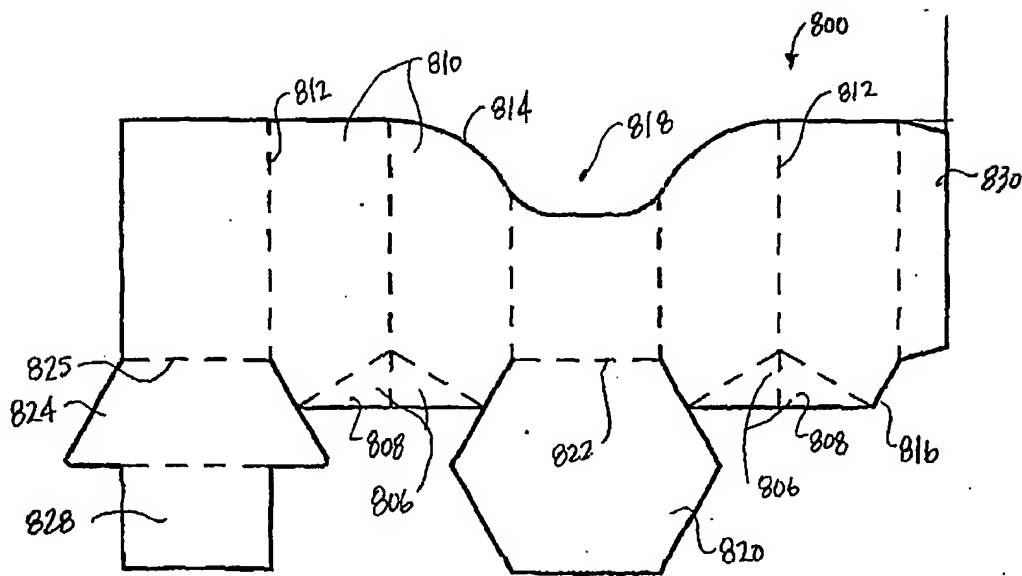
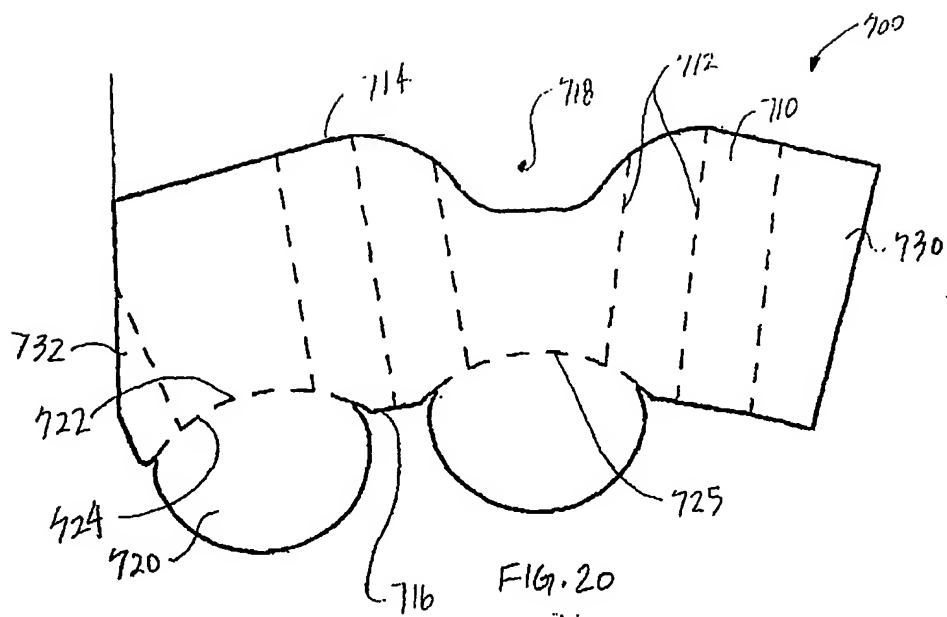


FIG. 21

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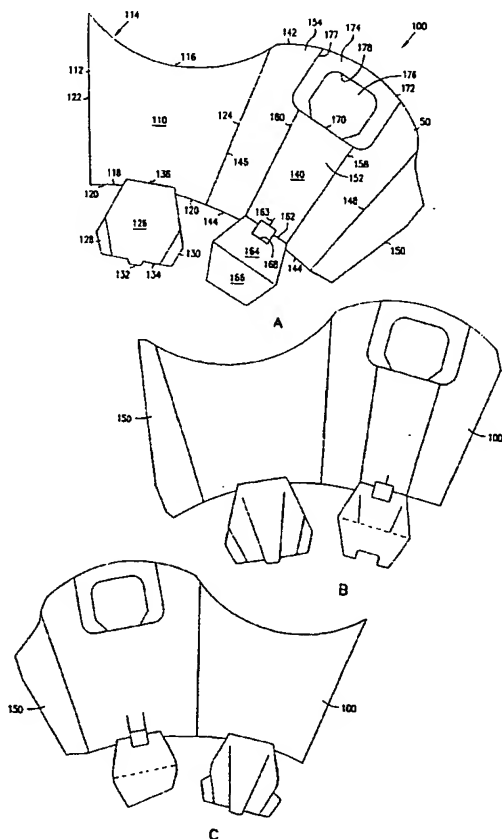
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **ROCK-TENN COMPANY** [US/US]; 504 Thrasher Street, Norcross, GA 30071 (US).
- (72) Inventors; and
(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **ROCCAFORTE, Harry, I.** [US/US]; Apartment 1701, 2800 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60657 (US). **RAJTER, Robert, G., Jr.** [US/US]; 1800 Chattahoochee Run Drive, Suwanee, GA 30024-8367 (US).
- (74) Agent: **VIKSINS, Ann, S.**; Schwegman, Lundberg, Woessner & Kluth, P.O. Box 2938, Minneapolis, MN 55402 (US).
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: FOOD CONTAINER FOR USE WITH CUP HOLDER AND A BLANK THEREFOR



(57) Abstract: A food container (200) has a substantially circular base which is insertable into a cup holder. The food container (200) is optionally formed of a plurality of paperboard panels (110, 140), and optionally comprises a scoop. The food container optionally includes a fold-down structure (174) for supporting a condiment container (240) therein, where a user has simultaneous access to contents of the food container (200) and the condiment container (240). A blank for forming a circular base includes a plurality of side panels (110, 140) coupled with a bottom panel (126, 164).

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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 B65D A47G

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 3 630 430 A (STRUBLE GLENN E) 28 December 1971 (1971-12-28)	1-10, 14-20
Y	column 1, line 59 - column 2, line 73; figure 4	11-13
Y	US 3 924 736 A (BELL RICHARD L ET AL) 9 December 1975 (1975-12-09)	11-13
	column 2, line 15 - line 25; figures 1,2	
X	US 4 267 955 A (STRUBLE GLENN E) 19 May 1981 (1981-05-19)	1-10, 14-20
	column 3, line 8 - line 65; figures 3,5	
X	US 5 720 428 A (JENSEN KURT D) 24 February 1998 (1998-02-24)	1-10, 14-20
	column 1, line 54 - column 2, line 47; figures	

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NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl.
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

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PCT/US 01/09177

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>US 2 139 239 A (RALPH MANCUSO) 6 December 1938 (1938-12-06) page 1, right-hand column, line 53 -page 2, left-hand column, line 15; figure 5 -----</p>	3-5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

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Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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US 5720428	A	24-02-1998	NONE	
US 2139239	A	06-12-1938	NONE	